

**Draft Summary of the Environmental Work Group Meeting
Oroville Facilities Relicensing (FERC Project No. 2100)
November 19, 2003**

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) hosted a meeting for the Environmental Work Group (EWG) on November 19, 2003 in Oroville.

A summary of the discussion, decisions made, and action items is provided below. This summary is not intended to be a transcript, analysis of the meeting, or to indicate agreement or disagreement with any of the items summarized, except where expressly stated. The intent is to present a summary for interested parties who could not attend the meeting. The following are attachments to this summary:

Attachment 1	Meeting Agenda
Attachment 2	Meeting Attendees
Attachment 3	Revised Resource Action Tracking Matrix
Attachment 4	Program Flow Charts
Attachment 5	Narrative Reports: EWG 56, 57A, 68A and 103
Attachment 6	Presentation: Potential Fish Habitat Restoration in Several Tributaries
Attachment 7	Presentation: Potential to Develop Side-channel Habitat in the High Flow Channel of the Feather River in Support of EWG 16A/B
Attachment 8	SP-F3.1 Task 5A Report: One-Mile Pond Fish Species Composition

I. Introduction

Attendees were welcomed to the EWG meeting. Attendees introduced themselves and their affiliations. The desired outcomes of the meeting were discussed as listed on the meeting agenda. The meeting agenda and list of meeting attendees are appended to this summary as Attachments 1 and 2, respectively.

II. Action Items – October 29, 2003 Environmental Work Group Meeting

A summary of the October 29, 2003 EWG meeting is posted on the relicensing web site. The Facilitator reviewed the status of action items from that meeting as follows:

Action Item #E110:	Transfer EWG 95 to the EOWG for evaluation of potential for a landslide within the reservoir to result in a seiche or wave of water that could overtop the dam or result in dam failure.
Status:	The Facilitator noted that EWG 95 was transferred to the Engineering and Operations Work Group for consideration and Curtis Creel, Operations Resource Area Manager confirmed that the transfer has occurred.
Action Item #E111:	Continue development of program approach to grouping resource actions.
Status:	The program approach was discussed later in the EWG meeting (see discussion below).
Action Item #E112:	Provide copies of narrative reports in advance of next EWG meeting for review prior to discussion.
Status:	Copies of narrative reports were distributed in advance of the EWG meeting.
Action Item #E113:	Discuss SP-F15 scope with NOAA Fisheries.

Status: This action item was deferred, pending an upcoming meeting between DWR and NOAA Fisheries.

III. Resource Action Development

Task Force Summary

Terry Mills summarized the efforts at the most recent task force meeting focused on hatchery issues. He described the discussions regarding a request to identify the Feather River Hatchery as a research facility and explained that a formal proposal is expected. DWR noted that the expected hatchery shut down to perform maintenance has been deferred until 2005 and they are working with the Regional Water Quality Control Board to obtain permission to delay implementation of a flow meter. Brad Cavallo with DWR described an experimental thermal marking program involving several hundred fish that will be initiated immediately at the hatchery. The next Hatchery Task Force meeting is scheduled for December 12th from 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. in Sacramento.

Terry Mills suggested another Task Force meeting be scheduled to discuss the water quality and fishery proposed resource actions (RAs) that remain to be categorized. The next Fisheries/Water Quality Task Force meeting is scheduled for December 11th from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. in Sacramento.

Updated Tracking Matrix

Mike Manwaring with Montgomery Watson Harza (MWH) distributed an updated version of the tracking matrix (Attachment 3) and asked the EWG to review and provide comments back to the task forces. He explained that the matrix includes a new RA for re-watering Ruddy Creek and a new column to report information pending for each RA. He noted that several RAs remain to be categorized by the Fishery/Water Quality Task Force. Terry Mills reported that at the December Plenary Group meeting he would be providing information regarding the recent activities of the EWG to identify and refine RAs and explaining the next steps related to program development. He suggested the participants begin thinking about how to finalize EWG recommendations to be forwarded to the Plenary Group and the Preliminary Draft Environmental Assessment (PDEA) team for further analysis.

Woody Elliot representing California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) asked what the relationship is between the PDEA process and the Plenary Group. The Facilitator responded that the topic is scheduled for discussion at the next Plenary Group meeting. Eric Theiss representing NOAA Fisheries expressed his concern that the PDEA process is not collaborative and their analysis is not open to review or comment by members of the collaborative, however Mike Mainz representing California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) pointed out that the PDEA document would be circulated and the participants could comment on the contents at that time. Sharon Stohrer representing State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) requested that DWR inform the collaborative regarding their intentions for the development of the PDEA. Terry Mills responded that this is a Plenary Group issue and the process would be described at the December Plenary Group meeting. The Facilitator noted that the December Plenary Group meeting is scheduled for December 16th in Oroville and will begin at 1 p.m.

Grouping Resource Actions into Programs

Wayne Dyok (MWH) distributed copies of two flow charts (Attachment 4) designed to describe how RAs related to one another and function within the context of programs to meet specific goals. He added that he will modify the charts to indicate which RAs have narrative reports prepared and Chuck Hanson (State Water Contractors) asked that the Category 1 and 2 RAs be indicated through shading. Terry Mills requested an additional chart to indicate those RAs that

are flow-related. Wayne will revise the charts and requested that any comments or suggested revisions be forwarded to Terry Mills for consideration.

Modeling Workshop Update

Curtis Creel (DWR) reported on the progress made by the modeling team to refine scenarios. He explained that future conditions, which were originally to be based on a 2030 level of development, would instead use the values developed for 2020. He noted that under either future condition, the State Water Project would be at full capacity so expects no impact from the decision. He reminded the participants that the next modeling workshop is planned for early January 2004.

Narrative Reports

DWR distributed four narrative reports covering EWG 56, 57A, 68A and 103 (Attachment 5). Dave Bogener with DWR described EWG 56, a proposal to create four new brood ponds at the Afterbay. He reported the costs to be approximately \$80-130K per pond. EWG 57A proposes to continue an on-going program for existing brood ponds and would cover nesting habitat enhancement with a cost of approximately \$10K per year.

Dave explained that the current version of EWG 68A reflects suggested revisions to the previous document. EWG 103 is a proposal to remove bass from the brood ponds to reduce duck mortality from bass predation. He noted that bass removal would also lessen the potential impact to giant garter snakes if DWR chooses to manage for that species at the Afterbay. The proposal would remove the bass in a non-lethal manner to lessen the impact on bass populations in the Afterbay resulting from de-watering the ponds. The program is also designed to reduce recreational disturbance to the nesting ducks by fishermen. Mike Meinz suggested that any re-design of the ponds include a deep area where the fish would naturally collect when lowering the pond water level for easy removal. He also suggested that Andy Atkinson with DFG be consulted if these proposals are moved forward.

Richard Harris with the consulting team presented results of an interdisciplinary field trip to evaluate the potential for fish habitat restoration in several tributaries to Project waters (Attachment 6). Sites visited include Honcut Creek, Ruddy Creek, and Hatchery Ditch. The team visited 10 sites on Honcut Creek and identified several features that would present passage problems. Anna Kastner with DFG reported that the Feather River Fish Hatchery had stocked fingerlings in Honcut Creek several years ago and would provide Richard with the data.

The team visited six sites along the former Ruddy Creek watercourse to evaluate the potential for re-watering and restoration and concluded that the gradient was too low to be amenable to salmonid habitat creation. Approximately one mile of channel would need to be excavated to re-connect Ruddy Creek to the Feather River. Michael Pierce representing Butte County suggested that the creek could be re-watered to address aesthetic issues for the community. Eric See noted that seasonal re-watering might benefit cottonwood trees but might not address the community issues. Richard suggested that the RA might be more appropriately addressed in the Land Use, Land Management and Aesthetics Work Group.

The team also investigated the potential for side channel habitat development on land adjacent to the Feather River Hatchery. The land is owned by DWR and may include a historic channel although there is currently no connectivity to the Feather River. Richard suggested that up to 40 cfs from the hatchery could be provided to a created channel with an excavated connection to the river. The team concluded that this may be a viable potential location for habitat creation or restoration and could provide both spawning and rearing habitat. Richard added that the gravel/cobble substrate should be evaluated to determine if it could support sustained flows.

Richard described sites visited to evaluate the potential to develop side-channel habitat in the high flow channel of the Feather River in support of EWG 16A/B (Attachment 7). Dave Bogener indicated that the mid-stream bar identified by Richard for potential re-design includes Elderberry bushes, home to an endangered species of beetle, and the bar itself lies within a designated historic mining district which may affect DWR's ability to alter it. Richard will incorporate this information in the narrative report. Eric Theiss asked how many fish could potentially be produced from this type of habitat development and Wayne Dyok suggested the use of weighted usable area (WUA) to compare potential habitat creation proposals.

IV. Study Deliverables and Implementation Updates

Reports

SP-F3.1 Task 5A

Eric See with DWR distributed SP-F3.1 Task 5A Report: One-Mile Pond Fish Species Composition (Attachment 8) and explained that high flow events caused communication between the pond and the Feather River, affecting species composition found in One-Mile Pond. The report includes a list of the fish species present and a general perspective on relative abundance. Eric noted that the report also includes a discussion of the relationship between species composition and existing fishery management activities.

A report on upstream water temperatures for Deer and Mill Creeks will be provided at the Fisheries/Water Quality Task Force meeting in December.

The EWG discussed ways in which comments to reports might be submitted and handled by DWR and Terry Mills agreed to develop and present a process for comment submittal at the next EWG meeting.

V. Next Steps

The participants agreed that the next few EWG meetings would focus primarily on the review of narrative reports. The next Environmental Work Group meeting is:

Date: December 17, 2003
Time: 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Location: Oroville Field Division

Action Items

The following action items identified by the Environmental Work Group includes a description of the action, the participant responsible for the action, and due date.

Action Item #E114: Solicit feedback from Andy Atkinson, DFG on EWG 56, 57A, 68A and 103.

Responsible: DWR

Due Date: December 17, 2003

Action Item #E115: Provide comments and suggested revisions for program flow charts to Terry Mills. Revise flow charts reflecting comments from EWG.

Responsible: EWG Participants/DWR

Due Date: December 10/17, 2003

Action Item #E116: Provide comments on narrative reports to Terry Mills.
Responsible: EWG Participants
Due Date: December 17, 2003

Action Item #E117: Develop and present a process for comments on reports to be submitted by EWG participants to DWR.
Responsible: DWR
Due Date: December 17, 2003

Carryover Item

Action Item #E113: Discuss SP-F15 scope with NOAA Fisheries.
Responsible: DWR/NOAA Fisheries
Due Date: December 17, 2003